

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OC-06

CCO-00 EB-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 SY-05 OPR-02 FEA-01 MCT-01

/090 W

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R 241045Z NOV 76

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4246

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

INFO AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

COMNAVTELCOM WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN

COMIDEASTFOR

NAVCOMMUNIT ASMARA

NAVCOMMSTA NEA MAKRI

CNO WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0974

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, ET

SUBJECT: FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN SECURITY AND UTILITIES SITUATION

REF: (A) ASMARA 0972 (DTG 231350Z NOV 76), (B) ASMARA 0966
(DTG 230735Z NOV 76)

1. CONTRADICTING PREVIOUS GLOOMY ESTIMATES REPORTED REF A, EELPA
RESTORED POWER FROM BOTH BELEZA AND MASSAWA AT ABOUT 1900 HOURS
NOV 23. THE REPAIRS TO THE POWER LINES ARE ONLY TEMPORARY AND
LOAD PROBLEMS ARE BEING ENCOUNTERED. AS THE FULL POWER LOAD CANNOT
YET BE RESUMED, THE POWER STATION AT KAGNEW IS PROVIDING SUPPLE-
MENTARY POWER. THE STEEL TOWER LINE FROM BELEZA IS STILL SEVERED,
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AND THE LOCATION AND EXTENT OF THE DAMAGE HAS STILL NOT BEEN

ASCERTAINED. THE POWER LINE TO THE MAI NEFHI RESERVOIR HAS BEEN COMPLETELY REPAIRED AND WATER SERVICE HAS BEEN RESTORED TO ITS FORMER LEVEL. ALL UTILITIES SITES CONTINUE TO BE WELL GUARDED.

2. IN THE FIGHTING ALONG THE KEREN ROAD, IT APPEARS THAT THE EPMG FORCES HAVE SUCCESSFULLY CLEARED THE INSURGENTS BLOCKING THE ROAD BETWEEN THE 15 AND 20KM MARKERS. THERE HAS BEEN CONTINUOUS BOMBING OF THE AREA SINCE THE OPENING OF THE FIGHTING ON NOV 21, WHICH HAS RESULTED IN AT LEAST THREE RECENTLY-ABANDONED VILLAGES BEING DESTROYED. ON THE FIRST DAY OF FIGHTING, AN ERITREAN COMMANDO POLICE COLONEL WAS KILLED, AND HIS FUNERAL ON NOV 23 WAS ATTENDED BY THE TWO VICE ADMINISTRATORS AND OTHER PROMINENT LOCAL OFFICIALS. ROAD CLEARING OPERATIONS CONTINUE, WHILE THE CIVILIAN CONVOY REMAINS PARKED AT VARIOUS LOCATIONS AROUND ASMARA.

3. SINCE THE ONSET OF THE FIGHTING ALONG THE KEREN ROAD, CONVOYS TO AND FROM MASSAWA HAVE BEEN SUSPENDED. THE SUSPENSION COINCIDES WITH THE ATTACK ON AN ASMARA BOUND CONVOY ON NOV 18. ANTICIPATING THAT INSURGENTS MAY AGAIN ATTEMPT TO HARRASS THESE CONVOYS, EPMG MILITARY AUTHORITIES HAVE APPARENTLY DECIDED NOT TO DIVIDE THEIR RESOURCES. AS OF NOON ON NOV 22, GASOLINE STATIONS HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED TO SUSPEND SALES OF MOGAS. LIKEWISE SUPPLIES OF KEROSENE ARE SAID TO BE TOTALLY DEPLETED. OIC NAVCOMMUNIT HAS BEEN ASSURED BY SENIOR EPMG MILITARY OFFICIALS THAT FUEL WILL BE PROVIDED TO KAGNEW IF REQUIRED.
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